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## **GLORIA MOLINA ANNOUNCES OFFICIAL 'INTERVENER' STATUS IN VERNON POWER PLANT DISPUTE**

### **Calif. Energy Com. Grants L.A. County Legal Right to Make Case**

LOS ANGELES (January 23, 2008)—Los Angeles County Supervisor Gloria Molina announced today the California Energy Commission has granted the county official “intervener” status in the ongoing dispute over the proposed Vernon power plant.

“This is great news,” Molina said. “It means we officially have a seat at the table. It means that as the California Energy Commission weighs the pros and cons of the Vernon power plant proposal, the concerns of Los Angeles County residents—and, specifically, families living in nearby unincorporated areas—will be heard. At the end of the day, only the commission can make the final determination on whether or not to allow Vernon to build the power plant—and only the California Supreme Court can overturn their decision. But we need to be involved now and the commission’s decision basically assures us an official seat at the table. There is no doubt that California’s energy needs are great but there is also no doubt that if the Vernon power plant is built, it will be massive—and it will affect families well beyond the City of Vernon’s borders.”

Back in December, Molina and her colleagues on the Board of Supervisors voted 4-1 to petition the commission to grant Los Angeles County (in conjunction with the City of Los Angeles and the Natural Resources Defense Council) official “intervener” status in the Vernon power plant case. The commission’s decision now makes the county’s role official.

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The City of Vernon has proposed developing a 943 megawatt power plant—and, already, environmental and community organizations have mobilized to stop its construction. If approved, the Vernon power plant would produce in excess of 880 tons of air emissions per year. The scenario is far worse with regard to regulated pollutants. Were the power plant to be built, it would tie as the seventh largest contributor of PM-10 emissions; it would rank as the sixteenth biggest producer of carbon monoxide; and it would be the twenty-first largest producer of nitrogen oxide emissions in the nation. If built, the Vernon power plant will be the most massive facility in Los Angeles County. Compared to other facilities in the region, it would be the top polluter in an area of Southeast Los Angeles where residents already suffer from high asthma rates (especially children).

The commission eventually will conduct an environmental review of the Vernon power plant proposal and has the authority to approve or deny the facility as proposed; to make modifications, including reducing the size of the facility; and to order any mitigations necessary to reduce its negative impacts. Notably, the facility has received authorization to purchase \$90 million of “Priority Reserve” air pollution offsets from the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) that theoretically could be allocated to reduce pollutants from other pollution sources in nearby communities (but, to date, have not been allocated for this purpose).

Some elected officials representing surrounding municipalities—most notably, L.A. City Councilman Jose Huizar, who represents the Boyle Heights neighborhood—already have opposed the Vernon power plant project. As a *de facto* mayor for unincorporated areas of the county near Vernon—such as East Los Angeles and portions of Florence-Firestone/Walnut Park—Molina felt especially compelled to advocate for representation in the commission’s review process of the proposed power plant. This process allows for concerned parties to intervene by directly participating in hearings, producing and examining witnesses, and otherwise representing their interest in official proceedings.

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Already, the Natural Resources Defense Council has intervened on behalf of the Mothers of East Los Angeles—which worked in the 1980s with Molina to successfully prevent the construction of a state prison in Boyle Heights—as well as the Boyle Heights Residents Association and others. The Los Angeles City Council unanimously voted for the city to intervene as well.

“I applaud the commission’s decision,” Molina said. “Now, Los Angeles County can officially raise concerns and make Vernon prove their information. We will not support construction of this power plant unless the commission and the City of Vernon can guarantee a simultaneous—and greater—reduction of pollutants by other pollution sources in the vicinity. If the power plant is going to be clean, let Vernon prove it. If it’s going to be a project that’s truly beneficial to the community, let them prove it. If it’s going to have all the so-called Priority Reserve credits that they promise, let them prove it. If the community is going to have to live with this intrusive power plant, let Vernon be a good neighbor and prove that this facility is worth it to everyone.”

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